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A CHRISTMAS IN THE SMOKIES

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Other Articles and Stories of Interest to All Members of The Family

OUR SUNDAY VISITOR PRESS HUNTINGTON, INDIANA

The Catholic Conference On Family Life

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
1312 Massachusets Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

A regional meeting of The Catholic Conference on Family Life is to be held in Milwaukee on December 6. The program for the occasion is not yet in final shape at this writing. Among the topics that have been chosen to date, and the speakers who are to present them, are the following:

Education for Marriage, Rev. Thomas Reilly, S. J.

Evading the Reefs of Matrimony, Judge R. J. Hennessy.

Parents: The Divinely Appointed Teachers of Their Children, Mrs. Thomas McCormick.

Family Life Among the Poor, Mr. Frank Bruce.

Maternity Guilds, Revs. Joseph J. Schagemann, C. SS. R. and Charles F. Keyser.

Some Aspects of Child Training, Dr. Henry C. Schumacher.

Home Interests, Rev. Dr. Edgar Schmiedeler, O. S. B.

His Excellency, the Most Reverend Samuel A. Stritch will also address the convention.

The Rev. Charles F. Keyser is in charge of local arrangements.

"As a general introduction to a series of Conferences on Catholic Action being inaugurated in the November issue of **"The Homeletic and Pastoral Review,"** says **The Catholic Messenger** of Davenport, Iowa, (Oct. 25), "His Holiness the Most Rev. Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, in an article entitled 'A Call to Catholic Action,' has brought together passages from his writings which most clearly explain the wishes and aims of His Holiness Pope Pius XI in inaugurating this apostolate.

"The series proper is opened in the November issue by the Most Rev. Joseph Schrembs, Bishop of Cleveland and Episcopal Chairman of the Department of Lay Organizations, N. C. W. C., with four Conferences dealing with the basis and scope of Catholic Action and the ideals which should inspire its apostles.

"The Rev. Dr. Edgar Schmiedeler, O. S. B., Director of the Family Life Section of the N. C. W. C. Department of Social Action, then contributes the first two of a series of three Conferences on Catholic Action in the Family. These are. 'Needed: A Christian Family Crusade' and 'Building Vital Families from Within.' The third of Dr. Schmiedeler's Conferences will appear in the December issue, and will be followed immediately by Conferences on Home Training of Catholic Children written by Father Kilian J. Hennrich, O. M. Cap., Director of the Catholic Boys' Brigade, and by Father Daniel A. Lord, S. J., National Director of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin.

"Speaking of the needs of the family, Dr. Schmiedeler says in part: 'It is but to state a truism to say that the family is absolutely basic in society. It is only to reiterate a fact oft repeated to add that its present condition is no less than alarming. Nor is it by any means to stretch the truth to maintain that unless very definite and determined steps are taken to restore the family to the position of dignity and honor that was its glory in the past, all efforts in other fields of Catholic Action will prove abortive and unavailing. Without such a restoration our civilization will continue its rapid downward course to certain ultimate destruction in spite of all other efforts made in its behalf. As Father Catherein has well said: 'If the social reform that is being demanded on all sides is to have any hope of success, it must begin with the reform of the family.' Most fitting, then, would it seem that the preceding Conferences on the nature and aims, the ideals and methods of Catholic Action in general, should be followed immediately by a special series on the family, a series that would discuss possible ways and means of bringing about the reform and restoration of this fundamental social unit."

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A Christmas In The Smokies

By Susan Russell

We who live in the busy marts of trade, accustomed to celebrating Christmas in the way big cities do, seldom realize the real meaning of the day, its sacredness, its beauty, the absolute holiness of the day itself. We think we do— and perhaps some few may—but it takes a Chistmas spent far away from all the glittering pomp and splendor, far away from the commercialism that marks the day for so many, to bring to us the Babe in the Manger and the peace of Christmas, even where there is a dearth of dollars but worlds of faith and hope and love.

Out there in the big open spaces, where dwell the simple hearts of earth, Christmas has not been commercialized. Out there, on the eve of Christmas, even the stars seem to have a wonderful light, while over the hills there comes a peace that is past human understanding.

I want to tell you of one Christmas I spent in a pine-log cabin in the heart of the Old Smokies, where a mere handful of Catholcs, all poor as to this world's goods, were getting ready weeks beforehand and where not a dollar was to be had to spend for anything. Of course, there was the usual air of mystery all around as they worked and planned, but the thing uppermost in their minds and hearts was to get the chapel ready for the day. "It has to be decorated and made ready for the Christ Child," they told me—and I wondered how it was going to be done.

For weeks the women had been busy sewing, even by tallow candlelight. During the day there was bleaching linen and lace, until, this being all ready, it was put aside for other things. These materials, remember, were made right there from the very beginning of the thread. On the walls were the hand looms, and the old spinning wheel was not in the corner, but in the center of the room and, as they say in the mountains, going from "can to can't," which means from daylight to dark. Strings of popcorn had been made, popcorn balls were ready, baking was done, and even the wild turkey gobbler was awaiting his fate. But as yet I could see no move towards the chapel.

However, on Christmas Eve morning, just at dawn, the Catholic men and boys roundabout went to the deep woods and soon brought back a wagon-load of evergreens, so beautiful they made you wonder how city folk ever thought they had seen evergreens. The chapel was made spotless. The evergreens were put in place, framing the little white altar and garlanding the crude walls of that little chapel, hiding the ugly parts and adding a Christmas touch that was adorable.

Then from the nearby mountain cabins—of Catholics—the mothers

and grandmothers came with boxes. From one of those boxes came a snowy white altar cloth. The lace on it had been made a generation ago. Everything needed for the altar, that could be supplied by an Altar Society, was ready, even the surplices of the acolytes. Tallow candles, too, made by these same women, were ready and waiting in home-made candlesticks, carved from hickory and stained with the stain of the crimson berry. The candles were of a deep cream color, and in their crimson holders, amid the evergreens on each side of the altar, they lent a touch of dignity and beauty to the scene. The candlesticks on the altar itself were like old ivory. The altar was white and green.

When all this was done, they got ready for the crib. Granny Nolan brought out her greatest treasure—a statue of the Blessed Mother, more than sixty years old. Granny McMahon brought the little hand-carved animals. These must have looked very beautiful to the Babe, for they were the patient work of little Maurice, the boy who had never walked until last Christmas Eve, when he left the earth-land and walked into that other land to meet the Christ Child. In a short while, a crib had been fashioned and stained brown with walnut juice. It was made from an old candle box; yet to me, reared in a large city, it seemed to be the most wonderful crib I had ever seen. I had been used to cribs ordered from factories, to electric light effects, to statues life-like in appearance, and to the grand ceremonials of Christmas Day. I thought one could not light a tree with anything but tiny electric rosaries. But all that faded away in the real beauty of this home-made readiness, the offering of real faith in, and love for, the Babe in the Manger.

Christmas Eve was cold with the penetrating coldness of the mountains. In the Donovan log cabin home, pinewood fires were burning in great, old-fashioned fireplaces. Popcorn runners were up; evergreens were in place; candles stood everywhere in home-made holders; the tree with its tiny candles was alight in the corner. I had to pinch myself to see whether I was really alive and still in this world of commercialized Christmases. Everyone seemed extremely happy. Yet, there was not a gift in sight.

After the supper things had been cleared away, the Catholics of the immediate neighborhood assembled in the Donovan home. Last year it had been in Granny Nolan's cabin. I wish I could make you realize the Christmas spirit that prevailed. I wish the power were mine to bring to you the simple splendor of this scene, as before the pine-log fire and in the candlelight, those present sang the age-old Christmas carols, led by eighty-year-old Granny Nolan. I have heard "Holy Night" rendered by paid choirs in vast Cathedrals, many times before and since, but I have never heard it sung so that it meant so much to me as it did that Christmas Eve.

At midnight they opened the cabin door to "welcome the Christ Child." Singing the "Adeste Fidelis," they stood, each with a lighted candle in his hand. Behind them the pine-log fire, the home lighted with tallow candles; before them the hills and spurs of other ranges; overhead the same stars that watched that first Christmas night so long ago. These people did not have a dollar to spend, and yet there was more real Christmas in their hearts than could be found in all that vast domain of wealth "beyant the flatwoods."

Father was coming in time for five o'clock Mass. That meant a fire in the chapel stove a long time before so the place would be warm. Others were coming, too, over the lonely trail from their homes miles and miles away. One of the older Donovan boys was sent to see to the fire and to remain to watch it. Two others took the wagon and went to meet the priest at the station twelve miles off the trail.

At three o'clock Christmas morning, the people began to arrive in wagons, in ox carts, on horseback, and in old, old Fords. They came to the Donovan cabin to wait for Mass. After Father's arrival, Mass was celebrated, every soul present going to Holy Communion.

Most of those who came were given coffee after Mass. Father had to go on twenty-five miles further up the trail to say another Mass, and some of the others had to leave at once if they wished to spend even part of Christmas Day at home, for their mode of traveling was slow.

A little package was given to each of the "home folk" by Granny Nolan. The packages were tied with Christmas colors and contained a pair of rosaries. The two little girls, both less than five years old, were made happy with rag dolls. I had wondered why, two months before, Granny Nolan had asked me to order for her so many rosaries. Now I knew. The money for them had come from her sale of hooked rugs.

In due time dinner was served, and it was delicious. The late afternoon was marked by a visit to the crib, and prayers. Each mother there made a special prayer, as they say it, and every prayer was one of real thanksgiving. Not a thing was asked from the Babe, except that "all be there again next year."

The Feast ended with a happy evening round the fireside. When we stop to think that it was celebrated in this fashion there in those mountains where bigotry is rampant, because of the intrepid faith of one woman, who for more than sixty years has each year celebrated Christmas in a similar way, we begin to understand what the Catholic faith really means to those who really know and love it. Since she came to those mountains as a bride, Granny Nolan has never let one Christmas go by without observing it for herself and her neighbors. For many years there had been no chapel. Mass was said in Granny Nolan's home. The few Catholics in the hills had been

fast forgetting their religion. Many of their children had not been baptized. Many couples were not married. They preferred to have no ceremony rather than the one that was customary there. As soon as it was possible to get a priest even occasionally, Granny saw to it that he came. That was long, long ago, remember, and some of the roads then were impassable. When Father did come, he had baptisms, marriages, and blessings of the graves of the dead, all in one day.

Sixty years is a long time. In those years, Granny Nolan has had plenty of sorrow, plenty of hardships, and few days of joy. In those mountains she reared her little brood to manhood and womanhood, only to see them follow their father to sleep on the hillside, beneath the white stone cross he had made. She seldom talks of those days. Her life is filled with doing for others. She is never lonely, never sorry for herself, never for a minute despondent. A little grandmother with hair like black satin and eyes as blue as a jaybird's coat, hers are the words that put warmth into hearts, hers the handclasp that gives you back your faith and trust in humanity. Hers, too, is the faith that makes a real Christmas in the mountains, that fashions a candle box into a crib, a shed into a chapel, a group of religiously indifferent people into a zealous Catholic parish. From her log cabin home in the Smokies, she sends you today a Christmas greeting, wishing you the merriest kind of a Christmas, and a happy, prosperous New Year.

IN-LAWS

A Christmas Day Letter

My Dears:

Well, the kids had a great day. It would have done your heart good to see them. I wish you could have been with us. God bless and keep you throughout the years to come. I know that personally I can never thank you enough for the wonderful girl that you reared—to become my wife, and I know that the good sense, the truth, the stability, the purity which fills her heart is but a direct heritage from yourselves.

I appreciate to the full also the good grandparents that you have been to the children and what you have done for them. I know of no way of expressing my thanks more fully or of showing my real appreciation than by saying that I will endeavor in so far as in me lies to accomplish and carry out your noble purposes. I hope that into the hearts of these grandchildren who carry a mixture of both our bloods. I can instill a little of the nobility which has actuated both your lives. And if I can do that, in the life that is to come maybe we can all sit contented in heaven and watch cheerfully and joyfully the joint product of our labor.

It is better for a spiritual man to suffer bodily cold, than to feel in his soul the least flame of impure passion.—St. Francis.

The First Christmas

A Christmas Thought for a Christian Family

By Rev. Martin Veth, O.S.B.

"Christus natus est nobis, venite adoremus!" "Christ is born to us, come let us adore."

With these simple words Holy Church places the feast of Christmas before us and fills us with its spirit. "Christ is born to us." This is the momentous event we commemorate. "Come let us adore." This is what we are to do. On this day the Babe of Bethlehem must occupy the center of the stage and we, young and old, are on our knees before Him, for the Babe Who is born to us is Christ, the Son of the living God, come to redeem us.

I cannot refrain on this occasion from recording a timely protest against certain regrettable modern Christmas practices, a protest made long ago by one of the most popular writers of the last century, Alban Stolz. He rightly deplored the fact that the Holy Infant is crowded off the stage altogether: the crib with the Divine Child is no longer found in the modern home, and a heavily laden Christmas tree takes its place. This is not good Christian family training.

The crib seizes and holds the imagination of the child and readily fills its unspoiled heart with religious sentiments. Few things on earth will give a child greater and purer joy than that of the traditional crib on Christmas night.

The Christmas tree, on the contrary, grows only fruit for sensuality and selfishness. The imagination is not fired, the heart is left cold. Instead of centering its thoughts and affections on the new-born Savior, the child is drawn away by the tree with its food for eye and stomach, and not seldom is its little heart filled with disappointment, envy and anger. The child that loves the tree more than the crib is a spoiled child.

How far this unchristian spirit may go at times is shown by the conduct of a modern lady whose own husband tells this story. Having no children herself, she bestowed that affection which nature gives to all women for children upon cats. When Christmas came, her pet cats had to have a Christmas tree, and the only difference was that instead of being decorated with nuts and candies, the tree was hung with hot dogs!

If you must have the Christmas tree with its gifts, take care that it shelters the Holy Babe, the center of attraction on this day, from whose Divine Hands all gifts come to mankind. The crib should occupy the home.

Better Housing

By Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O. S. B.

On the occasion of her eightieth birthday, Mrs. Roosevelt, mother of the President, spoke touchingly of her own home and remarked that of all the efforts of her son to remedy our present disagreeable conditions, she was particularly proud of his program for bettering the condition of the homes of the country. She referred, namely, to the National Housing Act.

The housing situation in this country needs correction. In business and industry we have gone ahead in machine fashion. In the matter of housing we have jogged along in horse-and-buggy style. Even as far back as 1880 Archbishop John L. Spalding referred to the dreadful results of the housing conditions of the poor in our American cities.

"There," he said, "the home is not owned. It cannot be transmitted; it has no privacy; it has no mystery; it has no shame. It is a rented room in some promiscuous tenement; it is a shanty in some filthy street or alley. The good and the bad are huddled together; and the poisoned air does no sooner take the bloom from the cheek of childhood than the press of sin and misery withers the freshness of the heart. The children rush from the narrow quarters and stifling air into the street, and the gutters are their playground."

We still have today such "squalid quarters of the poor" in our cities. Moreover, we have also vast numbers of other houses that are not up to reasonable standards of convenience and comfort. We find them in the shacks and shanties of the coal towns, in the cold and unplumbed farmhouses of the great open spaces, in the desolate hovels of the hill-billies. Some even maintain that two-thirds of our people are not suitably housed, that of thirty million American families, twenty million need new homes or extensve capital improvements in old homes. They argue that it would take from ten to twenty years of intense activity on the part of the building trades to remedy the situation.

Many feel that the present National Housing Act will never adequately fill the need. We cannot discuss that now, but wish to point to one matter in the present program that should be of concern to all. It is the matter of interest on loans. Asked what the cost of credit would be, the Federal Housing Administration intimated that it would be five per cent, and then gave the following example: "If you need $285 for housing improvements, you might sign a note for $300 payable in twelve equal monthly installments. In this case the note would not bear interest, because the maximum charge permitted ($15) would be included in the face of the note."

The truth of the matter is, in the case above the borrower pays more than five per cent. He gets only $285 instead of $300 to begin with, and this $285 dwindles month by month as he pays his monthly installments, yet the financing charge remains

fixed as if the borrower had the entire loan for the full year. If the loan were for a longer period—say for three years—the interest charge would average over eleven per cent instead of five per cent. In other words, it would be just under seven per cent the first year, approximately eleven per cent the second, and in the neighborhood of thirty per cent the third year.

If these regulations remain standing and legal, then the borrowing public must supply its own guard against such financing charges. Even at best, the efforts of the National Housing Administration can prove helpful only to the better-fixed classes. It can do little or nothing for the poor. Some form of government help seems essential for the latter.

A little more than a year ago the Catholic Conference on Family Life drew up the following resolution on the question of housing: "In view of the fact that hundreds of thousands of American people are living in homes that are scarcely fit for human habitation, we urge that in the allotment of the vast sums appropriated for a public works program, due attention be given the possibilities of bettering our housing conditions through generous provisions for this purpose."

Some attention has been given the matter of better housing since those words were written, but hardly "due" attention. When the housing division of the Public Works Administration was established, an invitation to private organizations to establish low-cost housing projects on P W A loans was broadcast. One hundred millions of dollars had been alloted for these federal housing projects. The proposition of the P W A was to lend the greater part of the capital to private corporations which were to contribute about 15 per cent equity in cash or land or both. Their operations were to be subject to federal approval, and each corporation was limited in profit to 6 per cent on its own equity investment. This limited dividend experiment failed to get anywhere. Only seven projects were actually approved and only one of these has been completed to date.

This failure led to a change of policy on the part of the Public Works Administration. Furthermore, other developments are under way that suggest that the government is now turning more and more toward a vast housing program as the outstanding feature of a gigantic public works program by which it hopes to put millions of unemployed to work in productive fields and thereby get them off of direct relief which leads nowhere.

The P W A has concluded that for the present low-cost housing would have to be undertaken as federal slum clearance and low-cost housing projects, enjoying the benefits of an outright grant of 30 per cent of the cost of labor and materials. There is now on hand $150,000,000 for this purpose—the price of three battleships, as someone has significantly remarked. Thirty-nine projects in 33 lo-

calities are being considered. They run from $320,000 in Montgomery to $12,500,000 in Chicago. The plan is to amortize them over periods extending from 33 to 45 years. Eventually, when the government has received back its investment (except the 30 per cent grant) through amortization from rents, it will turn the projects over to the municipalities. It is hoped that these federal demonstration projects will spur many cities to undertake slum clearance projects on their own.

It is highly doubtful whether the P W A will stop with this $150,000,000, program. Indeed, the administrator has said that he could use between $1,500,000,000 and would like to have the present $25,000,000 allotted for subsistence homesteads swelled to $500,000,000. And quite aside from this, the director of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration is beginning to speak of an appropriation of $1,000,000,000 for the wholesale building of small homes for the unemployed in rural communities all over the country. These homes would be amortized over a long period and the government would lose nothing.

There should be no mistake in launching a mighty and thoroughly organized attack on our housing situation in this country. We have allowed conditions to exist that are a disgrace to a Christian civilization—conditions that are not only at the bottom of the misery suffered by the lower classes in modern society, but also of the constant growth of immorality, crime, and even insanity. It is indeed time that we realize that "the preservation of the republic depends in as great a measure upon the way that its citizens are fed, clothed and housed as upon the size of our battle fleet and air armada."

The Changing World and The Family

Upon this changing world there rains a flood of recommendations, suggestions and hints. There is a jumble. Many stand confused. Some are in despair. Many seek only material comfort or recreation or pleasures or vices. American newspapers and magazines, short stories, novels, poems, movies and plays are mirrors. So many now do not know what the purpose of their life is.

This affects every American. It affects Catholics because we are Americans. It is dangerous. The tradition for generations past of our country and the world has been to limit religion to a narrow part of life. Yet as long as the world and our country were not changing so much, many old habits which religion had taught remained. Religion kept its unfluence very often in family life when public life and working life had almost entirely escaped. But now it is the harder for religion to guide life and form habits that will turn our new world to our welfare now and in the life to come. Much is pagan or simply false that is written and spoken on how to live the good life in a changing world.

—Rev. R. A. McGowan.

Training Children In Charity

By Anna W. Schneider

In Catholic educational circles it is generally accepted that the primary responsibility for the character training of the children rests upon the parents and the home. It follows naturally that parents should help their children to cultivate the virtue of Charity.

St. Paul's description of Charity, (1 Corinthians XIII, 4-8) is probably the best one available in any literature. It may well be used by parents, first in order that they may develop this virtue themselves, and secondly to serve as a model for the practical teaching of their children. The following (meditations of a lay social worker) may be suggestive:

"Charity is patient, is kind". The youngest child can and should be taught to be gentle and considerate of those about him. He may want a particular plaything or the attention of a parent while the latter is otherwise occupied. He may then be taught to wait quietly, thereby learning self control at the same time he is practicing the virtue of patience.

"Charity envieth not". The first child in a family, so often accustomed to having his own way should early learn that he may not have everything he wants. Other children who come into the family later must also learn that each one has certain rights which the others should not encroach upon. Parents should also set an example in regard to envy. If they try to keep up with their neighbors in many things when they do not have the means to do so, children soon follow the example and want everything that they see other children have. The step from envy to taking what does not belong to one, is not a very difficult one to take.

Charity "dealeth not perversely". How often have we seen the infant, the toddler, the child in the lower grades in school, refuse to do what he is asked by parent or teacher? It is true that at times the request may be unwise or unnecessary, but should not the child learn that refusing to conform with a request from a superior may seem cute to him but is in reality an offense against Charity as well as an act of disobedience? As the child grows older these little things easily develop into wilfulness and stubborness, and may easily lead to serious misconduct.

Charity "is not puffed up". Perhaps this is one place where parents and other adults dealing with children are very remiss. They show off the infant who has learned a new trick, they boast of the accomplishments and good qualities of the young child in his presence, and then wonder why he soon develops an unpardonable pride which makes him disliked by associates of his own age, and hard to live with at home. Modern mothers who give their young daughters everything they want, even

permanent waves, and other non-essentials, and fond fathers who give their small sons playthings and opportunities not enjoyed by their playmates may well ponder whether they are doing rightly.

Charity "is not ambitious." If children learn when young the real purpose of their existence they are not apt to become dissatisfied, disgruntled and rebellious when they see others have money, education, and places of honor which they may not hope to have.

Charity "seeketh not her own". Even the very small child can be taught not to insist always upon having everything to which he has a right. To do so helps develop selfishness, whereas thoughtfulness of others is much to be preferred both as a social trait and for the happiness of the individual. Too, a child who is always looking for what belongs to him may easily begin to want things to which he has no right.

Charity "is not provoked to anger". Here again example is very important. Little wonder that many children develop temper tantrums and the like when they see their parents losing their temper over many things, and even punishing the children when they are angry. If parents could foresee the growth of temper tantrums into many serious problems of behavior in childhood and adult life they might exercise a little more self control. Also, in these days when mental hospitals are being taxed to capacity to care for patients it is well for all to realize that control over our emotions is very necessary if we are to maintain "a sound mind in a sound body". The earlier the virtue of self control is learned the easier it is to acquire, and the better it is for the individual.

Charity "thinketh no evil". The small child seems to naturally trust those about him. If we adults live up to this faith it will not be hard for the child growing into manhood and womanhood to be always ready to think good of his neighbor. If only once in a hundred times a person may be wrongly judged adversely is not irreparable harm done? Moreover, if a person is not to think evil of others does it not follow that he must first so live that he can think well of himself?

Charity "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth". The innocent delight which the small child takes in every new accomplishment, which is after all truth in action, makes one realize that it should not be difficult to teach this trait. Honesty on the part of adults in all dealings with children is an absolute essential if the children are to be expected to be truthful. Promise of rewards or punishments should be kept. False stories about the bogey man, the policeman and the like may both arouse ungrounded fears which may result in serious personality disorders, and cause the child to delight in misrepresenting things to parents and other superiors. From such little things might not the attitude "do anything but don't get caught" easily develop?

Charity "beareth all things, endureth all things". Although many trials beset parents today, and many injustices are encountered in work and other spheres of activity a patient endurance of them when they can do nothing to remedy them, is essential. Prayer for grace to suffer patiently is necessary. Some of the saints even prayed for humiliations that they might gain more merit. If we cannot do that at least we should ask for grace to suffer patiently for Him who gave His life for us. Children will follow the example set by their parents in this regard.

Charity "believeth all things, hopeth all things." Faith and Hope, the companion virtues to Charity, seem to follow naturally and at the same time to be integral parts of Charity. If a child early learns faith in God it should not be difficult for him to learn to have faith in his fellow-man who has been made in God's image. Having learned to believe is it not natural that the child should hope for the best in all people? If children experience things which tend to make them lose confidence in others, do we not have an obligation to try to interpret the incidents as charitably as possible, so that the children may continue to believe and to trust? The world is not perfect, and never will be, but if all try to cultivate the simple faith of a child we shall be happier ourselves and make those about us happy. No one likes a cynic.

St. Paul closes his description thus: "Charity never falleth away, whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed." It is a thing unchanging in a changeable world. It is the source of all supernatural blessings. It is both a way of life and the goal of life.

When one realizes that the Ten Commandments may be summarized in "love of God, and love of neighbor for His sake" he can do no more than humbly pray that he may himself grow daily in the virtue of Charity, and both by example and precept may help those entrusted to his care also to develop this virtue.

The Wordly and the Christian Man

The wordly man, swayed by the passion of enjoying every good here below, will count sin as nothing, or very little. Provided he is amused, all means are good and praiseworthy. The Christian, on the other hand, without despising the relaxations and enjoyments necessary for his feeble nature, will dread above all any offence aganst God. Like St. John Chrysostom, he will fear nothing but sin; "unum timet Chrysostomus, peccatum." He will never forget that his soul is immortal, and that God will judge it. Nay, more, to fear the judgments of God is not sufficient for him, and as he loves God as a Father most worthy of all love, he will always seek to please Him in everything. Such a thought has not existence in the heart of a worldy man.—*Msgr. Albert Farges.*

Love the Greatest Gift of All

By Mary E. McGill

It is at Christmas time more than at any other period in the year that LOVE truly manifests itself as THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL. Hearts that are sterile of affection during eleven and a half months of the year's calendar of twelve slowly unfold.

The unfolding is gradual and perhaps many would miss the experience of the pre-joy of Christmas expansion were it not for the beautiful Christmas stories appearing in publications early in December. These stories bubble from the hearts of idealists, who have never ceased to dream, or they are born in the travail of heavy sorrow but nourished at the white breast of deep abiding faith.

The unceasing activities of the merchants who call loudly to fathers and mothers in the daily papers to make joyous a little one's Christmas, and whose windows invite most cordially by their beckoning toys, books, musical instruments, furs, lovely wearing apparel and dainty accessories, all tend to promote enthusiasm.

True joy, which is of the spirit, transcends the material. Much of this Christmas flowering may be credited to the influence of early memories of childhood's happiness around the home fires, the delight of irresponsible diving into the well-filled stocking and the hastening to mother and father to show the treasures. Then retrospect invites ascending happiness and again the heart thrills to the strains of the Christmas carols. But the most potent reason of all for Christmas joy is the sacred remembrance of love for the dear Christ Child, when the heart was pure and unsullied and all thoughts were tender and kind.

Unseal Love's Spring

All these things combined unseal the spring of love and hearts that have grown callous during the year become warm and vibrant; souls that are unsympathetic and hard take on a new understanding of humanity; eyes that soften not with tenderness for months suddenly become luminous, the voice, grown stern from encounters with life's difficulties, assumes a new cadence, musical and heart-thrilling; the handclasp that formerly was cold and meaningless now carries a greeting of sincerity, and the spirit of the world sheds its cloak of selfishness, rakes from beneath greed's accumulated ashes the buried spark of humanity and blows new life into it with a breath of love—the love that is placed in each soul by God whose infinite love holds together the finite and to whose image we are all made.

And this same spirit of the world, which perhaps has embraced you and me—your neighbor and my neighbor—the Gentile and the Jew—the Catholic and the Protestant— members of every creed—the white and

the colored—the rich and the poor—the good and the bad—this self-same spirit bows its proud head, bends its stiff knee, and imitating the Christ Child in the lowly manger more than 1,900 years ago, casts a radiance all about.

The Christmas Spirit

This radiance reaches out from the mansions of affluence, is reflected in the dwellings of the masses comfortably well to do, and permeates the lowly homes of the poor—ah, there are so many millions this year and may the Infant Jesus have merciful pity on them and move hearts to share with them food and drink, clothing and shelter!—All about a glow of warmth is cast—an encouragement to harmonious understanding—an impetus to a greater brotherly love—a union of hearts—a welding of a nation—a yearning for God—an adoration of the Divine Infant Saviour.

This is the Christmas spirit—The spirit of love which is the reflection of the divine. God is Love. He gives us freely of Himself. All who desire may enjoy Him—The very poorest have access and welcome. But some of these are so utterly miserable, cold and hungry, numbed with pain and sorrow, that their physical eyes are frozen and unseeing, and their souls unbelieving. Whose fault this? Yours and mine. Your world and mine has permitted this catastrophe to come about because of greed, selfishness, and sin.

Before we kneel to accept the Holy Babe's gift of Divine Love would it not be courteous to the beautiful Little One that we wash our hands in the sincere promise of laboring to restore to our neighbor opportunity of gaining the necessities of life? This right of humanity to enjoy peace and reasonable comfort is styled social justice. Catholics, who are taught the meaning of true charity and the demands of Christian justice, are often without comprehension with respect to a living wage. If under stress it is possible to obtain a service for five dollars which should be compensated by twenty-five dollars, you have not been a clever business man or a provident housewife. You have become a defaulter in social justice to the extent you have indulged in this shrewd art of paring, of four-fifths in the instance cited. Don't flatter yourself that you even the debt by flourishing your right hand liberally toward the collection box on Christmas morning. You should do that too, in proportion to your means, but that does not pay your debt to the one from whom you have withheld just compensation. The statement that so and so was willing to work for the amount you offered does not exculpate you. If you were at your wits' end, wouldn't you take five dollars, even though bitterness were in your heart because of the injustice, rather than be without employment?

Some one groans: "She started off with the Christmas spirit and before the climax of joy senselessly she interposes disquieting thoughts."

The right time to blend love and justice is when the heart is liquid,

not when it is congealed and mercy has been walled in!

Are we going to accept God's gift this Christmas? If so, are we going to offer but one-fifth in return for the magnificent service of a God to His creatures? Or, do we intend to affectionately present our promissory note to promote His honor and glory and to further human welfare by furtherance of social justice?

And then, out of the fullness of our hearts, are we this coming Christmas morning going to give first to the Holy One—the Babe of Bethlehem—and then to our family, friends and neighbors, THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL—LOVE?

AM I CALLED TO FOLLOW CHRIST?

This question is in the heart of many a young man and woman standing at life's cross-roads. Father William Doyle, S. J., in his pamphlet on "Vocations," enumerates twelve signs by which one may discern whether or not one has a religious vocation:

1. A desire to have a religious vocation, together with the impression that God is calling one to His service. This desire is generaally most strongly felt when the soul is calm, after Holy Communion and in time of retreat.

2. A growing attraction for prayer and holy things in general, together with a longing for a hidden life and a desire to be more closely united to God.

3. To have a hatred of the world, a conviction of its hollowness and insufficiency to satisfy the soul. This feeling is generally strongest in the midst of worldly amusement.

4. A fear of sin, into which it is easy to fall, and a longing to escape from the dangers and temptations of the world.

5. It is sometimes the sign of a vocation when a person fears that God may call him; when he prays not to have it and cannot banish the thought from his mind. If the vocation is sound, it will soon give place to an attraction, though Father Lehmkuhl says: "One need not have a natural inclination for the religious life; on the contrary, a Divine vocation is compatible with a natural repugnance for that state."

6. To long for God's glory, to realize something of the value of immortal souls, and to desire to co-operate in their salvation.

7. To desire to devote one's whole life to obtain the conversion of one dear to us.

8. To desire to atone for one's sins or those of others, and to fly from the temptations which one feels too weak to resist.

9. An attraction for the state of virginity.

10. The happiness which the thought of religious life brings, its helps, its peace, its merit and reward.

11. A longing to sacrifice oneself and abandon all for the love of Jesus Christ and to suffer for His sake.

12. A willingness to be received in any capacity is a proof of a real vocation.

Question Box

Readers are asked to send questions of general interest to the Catholic Family Monthly, Care of Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Indiana.

Can you give any statistics which will prove that the practice of birth-control by so many people to-day has any influence on the ever-increasing number of divorces?

That there is a close relationship between birth-control and divorce is proved by Dr. Alfred, of Columbia University, who recently permitted to be published the following approximate statistics: Sixty-two per cent. of all divorces in the United States are granted to couples who have no children; twenty-four per cent. are obtained by the parents of only one child; eight per cent. are granted to parents of only two children; only three per cent. to parents of three children; about one and three-quarters per cent. to parents of four children; and about one and a quarter per cent. to parents of five or more children. From these figures, only one inference can be gleaned: that children are not only a binding tie between husband and wife, not only intensify their mutual love, but bring greater happiness into the home. Those persons who practise birth-control and refuse to have any children obtain by far the greatest percentage of divorces granted. Therefore, we can assume that birth-control does have a great "influence on the ever-increasing number of divorces."

Will you kindly explain the teaching of the Catholic Church with regard to sterilization?

No better explanation of this distasteful question can be given than that which comes from the pen of Pope Pius XI and which is contained in his encyclical on Christian Marriage. The Holy Father says:

"That pernicious practice must be condemned which closely touches upon the natural right of man to enter matrimony but affects also in a real way the welfare of the offspring. For there are some who, over solicitous for the cause of eugenics, not only give salutary counsel for more certainly procuring the strength and health of the future child—which, indeed, is not contrary to right reason—but put eugenics before aims of a higher order, and by public authority wish to prevent from marrying all those who, even though naturally fit for marriage, they consider, according to the norms and conjectures of their investigations, would through hereditary transmission, bring forth defective offspring and more, they wish to legislate to deprive these of that natural faculty by medical action despite their unwillingness, and this they do not propose as an infliction of grave punishment under the authority of the State for a crime committed, nor to prevent future crimes by guilty persons, but against every right and good they wish the civil authority to arrogate to itself a power over a faculty which they never had and can never legitimately possess.

Family More Sacred Than State

"Those who act in this way are at fault in losing sight of the fact that the family is more sacred than the

State and that men are begotten not for the earth and for time, but for heaven and eternity. Although often these individuals are to be dissuaded from entering into matrimony, certainly it is wrong to brand men with the stigma of crime because they contract marriage, on the ground that, despite the fact that they are in every respect capable of matrimony, they will give birth only to defective children, even though they use all care and diligence.

"Public magistrates have no direct power over the bodies of their subjects, therefore, where no crime has taken place and there is no cause present for grave punishment, they can never directly harm, or tamper with the integrity of the body, either for the reasons of eugenics or for any other reason. St. Thomas teaches this when, inquiring whether human judges for the sake of preventing future evils can inflict punishment, he admits that the power indeed exists as regards certain other forms of punishment, but justly and properly denies it as regards the maiming of the body. 'No one who is guiltless may be punished by a human tribunal either by flogging to death, or mutilation, or by beating.'

"Furthermore, Christian doctrine establishes, and the light of human reason makes it most clear, that private individuals have no other power over the members of their bodies than that which pertains to their natural ends; and they are not free to destroy or mutilate their members, or in any other way render themselves unfit for their natural functions, except when no other provision can be made for the good of the whole body."

Will you kindly explain the requirements for the gaining of the Jubilee Indulgence?

The Jubilee Indulgence may be gained from this time until Easter of next year. It may be gained as many times—both for the individual and for the Poor Souls—as the prayers and other requirements are complied with. The requirements are: 1) Confession and Holy Communion; 2) twelve visits to churches designated by the Bishop of your diocese, and, 3) the recital of these prayers at each visit: The Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be to the Father, must be said six times before the altar of the Blessed Sacrament. The Aposltes' Creed must be recited three times before the Crucifix, and must be followed by these words: "We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee, because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world." Then before the altar of the Blessed Virgin the Hail Mary must be said seven times in honor of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Mother. To these may be added any verse of the Stabat Mater or a similar prayer. Then the Aposltes' Creed is said once before the Blessed Sacrament.

The Sacraments of Confession and Communion may be received at any time during the period in which the requirements for the gaining of the indulgences are fulfilled. It is recommended, however, that Holy Com-

munion be the last of the conditions fulfilled.

As stated above, the churches to be visited are designated by the Bishop, but the usual policy which is being followed in the United States is this: Where there is only one Catholic Church in a town or city that Church must be visited twelve times; where there are two churches each must be visited six times; where there are three churches each must be visited four times; where there are four churches each must be visited three times. Where there are more than four churches the parish church and any three other churches must be visited. In the Cathedral city the parish church, the Cathedral and any two churches must be visited.

The visits to the churches may be made in whatever order one desires and on one or several days, but each visit must be distinct. In order to comply with this requirement it is necessary to leave the church and enter it again, however brief be the time spent outside in the interval.

Suppose you go to confession and confess a mortal sin that you have committed, knowing that you will soon be committing that same sin again and again. Does that make your confession bad?

How do you know that you will commit the same sin again? If you are quite positive, then you are already planning to commit the sin again and your professions of sorrow and purpose of amendment are a mockery. But that is not what you mean. You wish to say that, because of former sad experience with your strong passions or an enslaving habit, you are apprehensive that you will fall back into your former sins. But this apprehension need not interfere with your firm purpose. Your purpose of amendment is sufficiently firm when you are sincerely determined to avoid sin in future, your frequent relapses notwithstanding. You will never be able to foresee with certainty whether you will really carry out your resolution or not, since you cannot foretell the future. The principal point is that you have at least the honest intention to do your best to avoid sin in future. Accordingly, if the priest would ask the penitent about his purpose of amendment and the latter would honestly answer, "I am weak, I'm afraid I'll fall again, but I don't want to now," that penitent would have a true purpose of amendment.

We must remember that powerful passions and strong and habitual inclinations to sin are not, properly speaking, sins. Like temptations, they are an incentive to sin and must be manfully and prayerfully resisted when they urge to sin.

What is meant by Spiritual Communion?

It is an earnest desire to receive the Blessed Sacrament when one is not in position to communicate in reality.

The mysteries of the Passion of Jesus Christ, well pondered, are so many sparks capable of inflaming us with his holy love.

Marriage and Family Briefs

By Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O. S. B.

Dr. Frederick Funder, Vienna Correspondent for the *N. C. W. C. News Service*, points out that the Catholics of Hungary, led by Cardinal Seredi, hope to have the compulsory civil marriage statute voided during the forthcoming session of parliament. "For 40 years," he says, "the law by which compulsory civil marriage was introduced in Hungary has been in force. It was passed, amid violent disputes, over the protest of the Catholic People's Party and the Bishops, and after Emperor Francis Joseph had repeatedly refused to sign the bill.

"Since then the political situation of Hungary has changed greatly. The evil produced by the law and the facilities it offered for divorce have stricken the country. The disorganization of marriages and the decrease of births have taken such devasting dimensions that one needs not be a Catholic or start from religious considerations to arrive at condemning the law and recognizing the necessity of its being abolished or at least reformed."

* * *

After a scholarly and beautiful discussion of St. Paul's idea of Christian matrimony, in the November issue of the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, the Rev. Dr. H. Schumacher states St. Paul's full definition as follows: "Christian matrimony, segregated from the profane and elevated to the supernatural, is something quite different from any other marriage. It is superwordly, objectively and subjectively holy, inspiring awe and commanding reverance, lavished with heavenly blessings, because it is the reiteration and recapitulation of the divine life of the union of Christ with the Church and therefore—the 'mega mysterion.'"

How different this from the badly founded misconstructions of modern non-Catholic interpreters which not only empty the Apostle's thought of its unique contents, but attribute to him a doctrine contrary to sound humanity!

* * *

A new population policy in Prussia has led to an increase of marriages and births. The strong increase in marriages since the introduction of marriage loans is shown by the figures for the first three months of 1934. In the 36 big cities of Prussia the total number of marriages reported during that period exceeded the corresponding number of the previous year by 11,892 or 52.5 per cent. The index for all Prussian big cities, figured per 1,000 inhabitants and one year, rose to 9.5 compared with 6.8 for the first three months of 1933.

The upward trend in the development of the birth rate which had started as early as the second quarter of 1933 continued more strongly.

The index of the birth rate of all Prussian big cities was 16.7 for the first quarter of 1934 compared with 14.0 during the same period of the previous year. Within the first three months of 1934 the rise was above normal. The index for January was 15.7, for February 16.7, and for March 17.9. The total number of births in the 36 big cities of Prussia during that period was by 9,954 or 23.4 per cent higher than during the corresponding three months of 1933.

* * *

Speaking at the recent convention of the National Council of Catholic Women, His Excellency, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, briefly outlined a program of action in behalf of the Christian family. "A program that would encourage and definitely help all," he said, "is a program that would look to the Christian education of every child in city or in rural districts; a program that would see to it that no family is in actual want; a program that would help secure proper vocational work for the children; a program that would seek to introduce the custom of family prayer, particularly during the Holy Season of Lent; a program that would lead the family to have in its home at least a few Catholic books; that would open to it the facilities of the Catholic library and the Catholic study club; a program that would make every family a supporter of the Catholic press, particularly of the weekly Catholic press, a program that in cooperation with the parish priest would promote in the Catholic home a closer and more informed cooperation with the liturgical life of the Church; a program that would seek to have the family and the home be a center of its own Christian and Catholic life, whereby that life would pour forth to serve our beloved Church, and all of human society."

* * *

In a timely article entitled, "Halos for Housewives," and appearing in *The Commonweal*, October 19, Marie L. Darrach makes some interesting observations regarding the present drift of women away from business and the professions and back to the home. We quote the following few significant paragraphs here for the benefit of those who may not be able to secure a copy of the entire article.

"After thirty years of obscurity the vocational title of housewife has achieved prestige; an upward trend in the occupation it designates is obvious; and a phalanx of women headed homeward is significant of a changing social order. Around the turn of the century, when a determined band marched forth in search of careers, the home began to lose caste as a completely satisfying environment for feminine activities. And although 12,957,565 single men provided easy pickings for 9,666,902 unmarried women in the year 1900, and no such discouraging economic conditions existed as are now disrupting the domestic field, a husband and a home were the last things these early feminists wanted. They preferred the hazardous struggle of

the professional arena to the safe and placid life of domesticity. And in time career women, as lawyers, librarians, doctors, writers, advertising experts and what not, so monopolized the spotlight and concentrated such attention on their exploits and compensations that the advantages falling to the lot of the housewife were obscured and her virtues and accomplishments forgotten. . .

"That few women would choose the humdrum sphere of domestic life if they could be successful in the business world, is a popular assumption which no longer has foundation in fact. Many of them now admit that they prefer the advantages of a home to the compensations accruing from professional activities. Among these are women of mature years, others in the full confidence of their middle twenties, young girls settling into their first jobs, college graduates and under-graduates. This changed attitude toward economic independence is corroborated by college statistics, and by norms and trends given out by personal directors and employment managers. . .

"That the role of housewife may be a stellar one when a woman's activities synchronize with the ambitions of her husband has often been demonstrated. The so-called 'society' girl, more than any other type of young woman, has proved this, and been consistently loyal to the calling of housewife, during the years when others were tempted afield by careers. She has always known that a well-conditioned home gives a woman a certain distinction no office suite imparts, and that the status of a housewife is often more impressive in a community than that of the successful business woman. While this esteem may be only the reflection of a husband's importance, it represents the quality of prestige that all women prize. And appreciated housewives are inclined to agree with Caesar who held that it was better to be first in a village in Gaul than second in Rome.

"Revived interest in the home is not only elevating the status of the housewife and attracting converts, but is also bringing into proper perspective the accomplishments of those women who have distinguished themselves in a calling long ignored. . .

"The scientific approach to problems of home management is raising the vocation of housewife to the dignity of a profession. And because of its social significance in any plan for national recovery, the successful operation of a home as a cooperative economic unit represents a more valuable contribution on the part of women than the releasing of their energies into the business world. And during the coming years of stress, inevitable while a new social order is being established, one of the greatest factors in the preservation of stability—morally, socially and economically— will the the housewife steering the American home clear of the many shoals now threatening to swamp it."

Foods and Nutrition

By Mary A. Brady

(For the Farm Family)

The subject of nutrition involves several factors; food, its selection, quantity, preparation, digestion, and assimilation; adequate sleep under satisfacatory conditions; recreation, adequate exercise; freedom from mental strain. Of all these factors the most important is food in its relation to proper nutrition.

The effects of the depression on the health of our people in general has been discussed in all its various aspects by many authorities on the subject. We are told by various departments of health in both rural and urban areas that the health conditions in many places have never been better than they are at the present time. However, there has also been the uneasiness over the situation and the fear that eventually there will be bad effects resulting from lack of proper nutrition. For this reason it is highly important that those who are responsible for the health conditions in our rural areas should work harder than ever to bring to the rural women the importance of realizing the necessity for keeping their families in the best physical condition possible.

It has been well said that, "A time of emergency is an excellent period in which to teach the scientific lessons that necessity forces on us." Also Dr. E. V. McCollum, of Johns Hopkins University, said in a recent talk given before a group of nutritionists, "I have long insisted that it is questionable whether we confer a favor upon people needing assistance by providing them a diet which is incomplete and incapable of supporting an optimal physiological well-being. A diet faulty in one or more respects permits a slow undermining of health, and gradually leads to a condition in which one is easily susceptible to tuberculosis or certain other diseases to which he would normally be comparatively resistant." So the problem of securing adequate food for the amount of money available is the most acute one in our present situation.

We are convinced of the fact that the money spent for food goes a long way toward purchasing health protection. At any time it is important that we give attention to the best selection of food and we know that the proper feeding of the family requires both knowledge and skill. But when every food dollar must bring the greatest returns both in nourishing the body and satisfying the appetite, we have a very difficult task before us. This is a problem which the farm woman of today must meet in order to maintain the highest standards in the health of their families.

I shall not go into the food needs of the family to any great extent today. This information can be obtained through reading of foods and health magazines. It is highly important, however, that this knowledge be given correctly and of that there will be more later.

As a matter of fact, the farms of

America can produce a great deal of the foods which the family needs. Practically every farm can have its own supply of milk, vegetables, fruits, meat, eggs and cereals. These foods are the backbone of proper nourishment. We are told by Dr. McCollum that, on a very low cost diet, it is possible to maintain a good state of nutrition upon milk and whole grain cereals over a period of time. However, we do not advise this very limited diet except under the greatest necessity. But it is well to know that the farm family has available these very inexpensive foods which are highly nourishing.

In another paper written by Dr. McCollum very recently he said that milk, vegetables, and eggs were the three outstanding foods necessary for health. All of these are raised upon the farm and can be made available in sufficient quantities for the use of the family. Indeed from the economic standpoint, amongst the dairy states of the Union, if the farm families would have faith enough in their own products to consume as much dairy products as are warranted for their best health, there would be no surplus of milk, but there would rather be an inadequate amount for city consumers.

There is a real need amongst our farm women for the dissemination of this information on proper nutrition and, therefore, there is a real need for leaders in our parishes who will bring this information into the farm homes. Our federal government has done a fine piece of work in this respect. Our Home Economics Extension departments in Wisconsin and other states have organized what are known as Home Makers Clubs. These groups carry on a series of meetings and continue from year to year. To these groups the Extension worker brings understandable, useable information to the Home Maker. Also there is made available to these groups free printed material on foods and nutrition obtainable from the federal and state departments of Home Economics. However, not nearly all of our Catholic farm women are reached through this service. So there is a real field for Catholic action in these parishes not reached. If there are specially trained women in Home Economics in the parishes they can do a splendid piece of work by giving of their time to the other women. Perhaps there are not many trained women in Home Economics in parishes throughout the country. But there are always some women who are learning about foods and nutrition and they could make the giving of this information a part of the study group in the parish.

I suggest a plan of what we might call "marginal programs". Where the study group is organized in the rural parish or where there are regular meetings of an organized society, there could be for not longer than ten minutes a brief discussion of some phase of nutrition at every meeting. I would suggest that this "marginal program" be carefully planned so that the information would be given according to a definite plan and

not haphazardly. We realize that it will take repetition to make this foods knowledge function with the women and to help them apply it with their own families. But I think it can be done. Of course, any knowledge of right nutrition is of little value unless it becomes a part of the foods habits of the home.

Farm women need information, as all other women do about food buying. Contrary to the usual opinion, farm women do purchase a good deal of the family's food. They buy bread because they think it is cheaper than to make it; they buy quantities of canned foods and a great deal of fresh fruits where the home-grown supply is insufficient. One of the things which should be brought to them is how to buy wisely so as to get the greatest food value for the money spent. Perhaps it is not the best plan to buy bread instead of making it. Not all brands of canned vegetables are equally good from the standpoint of nutrition. Here is a place for them to learn how to buy food and that food has another meaning besides just that of satisfying the appetite.

We are not especially interested in the scientific knowledge of foods as such, but we are definitely interested in truthful information about foods which has come as a result of scientific knowledge. Farm women do not particularly care about the number of calories in foods but they do want to know which foods will give the greatest amount of energy and growth and health for the children and adults in their families. They are interested in knowing which foods will make sound teeth and straight legs; that whole milk and fresh vegetables are the finest builders of sound teeth and healthy bodies. They need to know that too much sweets will fill the child without properly feeding him. They do need to know that there are many wrong notions about foods being distributed by people who do not have correct information. Cooking in aluminum vessels does not poison the food and it is perfectly safe for us to eat oranges and drink milk at the same meal. Farm women want correct information and they should get it from correctly informed sources. There will be the difficulty of making this correct information a part of their consciousness and it may be necessary to break down old habits and replace them with newer and more scientific ones. The breakfast of white bread and coffee we know is not adequate for building healthy bodies or for keeping the adults in the family well.

Finally, much of the success of the giving of this information to farm women will depend upon the kind of leadership in the parish. The leaders should be well and correctly informed on foods and nutrition knowledge. Furthermore they should be able to give it so that it can be readily understood and in such a way that the women will go home and want to use it. As this foods knowledge has to do with the foods which the farm produces, it can be utilized very readily. Otherwise it will be of little help.

The leaders need to be sympathetic with the problems of the parish in which they work When we work directly with homes, there needs to be an intimate understanding of the needs of the home and also the assurance to the women that they are getting information which has been tried out and proved to be worthwhile. In this giving of good information from the different parts of the country, different means of dissemination may be used. Besides personal contact of the leaders the radio may be used and the small town newspapers. Simple recipes using the farm produced foods can be handed out and a sort of exchange can be built up amongst the women themselves in which they give each other their best recipes. In the use of the radio, however, let us warn the farm women against accepting as scientific a great deal of the foods information which comes over the air. Indeed most of it is anything but scientific. Even the children become deeply interested in these commercial foods programs and are tempted to take as the truth much of the material which has no scientific basis.

Finally let us try to build up in the farm communities a preventive program so far as foods and nutrition are concerned. We do realize that it may be difficult to build such a program because of the comparative isolation of the farm family and of the fact that the farm family is very much of a distinct group. But in taking the parish as the unit, we recognize the different farm women as a part of the parish group, and so we can readily overcome this comparative isolation. Furthermore the women are very eager to learn. They look upon the maintenance of the health of their families as a Christian duty which they are eager to do well.

If the leadership in the community is of the right kind, there will be no difficulty in bringing this information to the women and in having them become a very definite factor in this maintenance of the family's health through the knowledge of right foods and adequate nutrition.

INSINCERITY

Sincerity is a trait of character very much sought for, and, relatively speaking, very seldom found. There are few who like to be considered insincere; in fact, there is nobody who likes it, yet the majority of the evils in the world are due to the want of this great virtue. The most indifferent Christian declares that he loves God, and at the same time he shirks the obligation which the love of God implies. Such a one is insincere. The boy who declares that he loves his father and mother, but makes no effort to please them, is a little hypocrite—insincere.

"No country attains greatness by and for itself alone. It is the gift of Providence, and the eternal price of keeping it is to keep eternally giving it away."—*Rev. James E. Walsh, M. M.*, Kongmoon, China.

Maternity Guilds

(A Resolution adopted by the 1st Annual Convention of the National Catholic Women's Union.)

"Unfortunately, the widespread assumption that the Catholic family in our country has preserved itself from the corrupting influence of sinful family limitation no longer holds good. It has been statistically established that the Catholic family is no longer larger than the non-Catholic family. Among us, too, the current attitude of comparative contempt for full and rich motherhood is winning converts. There is danger also that periodic marital continence may be perverted through the wrong intention known as the birth control mentality.

"Much has been spoken and written with the intention to correct this condition. But we have not as yet seriously approached constructive measures, of a material nature, to assist in overcoming these influences and in encouraging the Catholic parents to overcome the fear of obeying the law of God and nature. Non-Catholic, especially public advisory and clinical centers, are open to the suspicion of encouraging the very mentality we must untiringly seek to correct.

"By sponsoring the Maternity Guild movement for three years, the National Catholic Women's Union has focused attention upon a constructive project, which provides adequate relief, encounters no valid objections from physicians and hospitals, and is simple and direct in its method of operation. The Guild is designed to educate men and women and young people to an appreciation of the noble dignity of parenthood, to facilitate obedience to God's law and to encourage those who observe it conscientiously. According to the Guild-plan, these and other worthy ends are to be achieved by means of parish guilds having several classes of members. Membership includes physicians, maternity nurses and hospital administrators, who, together with parishioners of wealth and of moderate means, will make mutual concessions and sacrifices in the interest of all. Thus social justice and charity will be exercised toward all classes and the objectives of the great Encyclical on Chaste Wedlock will be attained.

"We therefore issue an earnest appeal to the members of the National Catholic Women's Union to present the suggestion of a parochial Maternity Guild to their respective pastors, with a request—through the Pastor—to the Most Reverend Bishop for the mandate or official commission and vocation to Catholic Action. to take up the study of the plan and to effect the establishment of the Guild. The success which has thus far attended the efforts at establishment in several places, together with the assurance of the hearty cooperation of the Central Verein, ought to render every State Branch and Society of the N. C. W. U. most eager to undertake the work of establishing these guilds in their several localities."

The Adventures of Benny Burt

By Rev. Andrew Green, O. S. B.

VI. FACING THE MUSIC

Margaret's confession of faith after the club meeting had its effect, and as they moved to depart, the effusive cordiality that had marked other occasions was lacking; the Saunders and the Barlows were the only ones that assured them that their religion would not count against them in social relations. On the way home and far into the night, Benny and Margaret discussed the incident and its probable effect on their relations with their neighbors, coming to the conclusion that much tact and abundant charity must characterize all their contacts. This, they decided, would be particularly the case in their dealing with Mrs. Jones, who on her first visit to Margaret had candidly expressed a cordial dislike for Catholics. The Wiltses and the Watkinses, too, who showed considerable coolness after Margaret's confession, would have to be dealt with cautiously.

As they arose next morning, they remembered that it was Sunday; and the prospect of making their debut in the choir and kindred matters shut off any thought of ticklish social affairs. They hurried through the necessary home chores in order to get to church in good time. The singing was excellent, the performance of the children was much above what Margaret had hoped; the priest, too, seemed well pleased, for in the course of his remarks before the sermon, he took occasion to commend the choir on their good work. Then he sprung a surprise on the Burts by referring to them in particular.

"We have reason," he said, "to be thankful for the acquisition of two new members in the congregation, but particularly two trained musicians, who will do much to build up our choir, if we just do what we can to co-operate with them. For this purpose, I am going to ask all the young people to come to the parish house at ten o'clock this morning to meet Mr. and Mrs. Burt; we will talk over the matter and see what may be done."

While this announcement was a surprise to the Burts, it was also a flattering appreciation from Father O'Toole. He seemed to appraise their abilities highly, and they then and there dedicated their best efforts to the building up of the choir of St. Mary's, Cowell. Whether the words of the priest or the fine singing of the children was the inspiration, at all events Benny and Margaret gave the priest, the children and the congregation a little treat at the offertory by singing the beautiful Gregorian *Salve Regina*. The delighted approval of the children was manifested in their beaming faces; the appreciation of the priest and members of the congregation came after the services.

A little before ten o'clock Benny

and his wife appeared at the rectory to meet the young people, as Father O'Toole had appointed.

"Say! you gave me a very pleasant surprise," was the priest's greeting. "Come in and be seated; the young folks will be along presently. That 'Salve Regina' at the offertory was an excellent sample of what I consider the Church's real music. If you can get the children and the young folks to sing in that way, you can have charge of the choir now and forever."

"At least we can try," answered Margaret simply.

It was a motley crowd of boys and girls that gathered at the door of the rectory, as the priest had requested. Fathes O'Toole greeted them cneesily and invited them in. After introducing them *en masse* to the Burts, he bantered them on their various performances, in school, in sports, and ended by asking them how much they knew about singing.

"Please, Father," said a roguish lad, "Sis can sing 'Nellie Gray' and 'The Man in the Moon'." There was a slight snicker in the crowd.

"And Tommy can sing 'Buffalo Gals' just swell," retorted his sister in self-defence.

"Well, well!" exclaimed the priest, "that's fine. We may get a chance to try you all out soon, but not now. Do you all like music?"

"Sure!" came a universal chorus.

"Now what was the nicest song you heard this morning?" asked the priest. The crowd seemed to be backward about expressing an opinion. At last the wag, who had tried to tease his sister, held up his hand.

"Well, Jimmie, what one did you like best?" asked Father O'Toole.

"I think it was the one the man and woman sang before the Preface," said Jimmie.

There was a general murmur of applause from the crowd.

"I see we are all agree on that point." said the priest. Then turning to the Burts: "That will cost you a quarter, Mr. Burt."

"It is well worth it," returned Benny with a chuckle.

On further inquiry, the priest found that all the young people would be only too glad to learn how to sing, and to take part in the church services. Then and there arrangements were made to have singing practice every Sunday after the first Mass.

This new development of the choir proposition gave Benny and Margaret matter for thought and discussion for several days to come, so that all thought of social difficulties vanished until the very eve of the next club meeting. That had been set for Thursday, and it was Wednesday before Margaret remembered that she had her minutes to write. That task she quickly dispatched, and then she began to go over in her mind the phases of the religion question that were likely to recur at the meeting on the morrow. She had set her mind upon bringing the question to an issue, even if she had to take the lead herself; for she was not willing to live under a cloud of suspicion.

The meeting came, and to Margaret's relief Mrs. Barlow herself, the

president of the cllub, brought up the subject. She briefly reviewed the incidents following their previous meeting: the proposition of starting a small school, the proposed selection of Mrs. Burt as teacher, and Mrs. Burt's confession of her religion as a possible disqualification.

"Now, Ladies," she concluded, "I believe we ought here and now to decide whether one's religion should be considered a bar to social or civic position, provided, of course, there is no other disqualification. What do you say, Mrs. Wilkins?"

"Mrs. President," said Mrs. Wilkins, rising slowly and hesitating to begin, "this is a delicate subject; but, as you say, we ought to come to an understanding here and now. I am a Presbyterian and from my youth up I have heard many bad things about Catholics. But when my husband and I were discussing the matter and got down to analyzing the various charges, we concluded that they had no real foundation in fact, as far as we could find. So we have decided not to allow religion to influence our relation with anyone."

"Mrs. President," said Madam Jones, rising as the speaker sat down, "I would like to ask Mrs. Watkins if there is not great danger to our children, if they are put under the control of a Catholic. We know that Catholics promise blind obedience to the pope, and I fancy they get their orders from him through the priest when they confess to him. I think there is real danger there." She paused a moment, looking hard at Mrs. Watkins, then sat down.

"Mrs. Jones," said the President, "I really think you are mistaken on this point. But I am going to ask Mrs. Burt to give us, what the boys call the 'lowdown' on the Catholics' relations to the pope and on confession."

"Mrs. President and Ladies," said Margaret rising. "I wish in the first place to assure Mrs. Jones that I am not at all surprised or hurt by the expression of her dislike for our Church; in truth I greatly admire her simple candor. I am sure she is a woman who tries to live her convictions, and I feel convinced that once she finds the accusations against Catholics to be untrue, she will be our staunch defender. Now to the points you have asked me to speak of: our relations to the pope and confession. The pope is our teacher; he tells us what we are are believe, and he has authority to regulate our moral life. His influence over our spiritual life is about the same as our President's influence over our civic life. The idea that the confessional might be a secret channel for the transmission of the pope's orders to the people is very far from the truth. Confession is solely for the correction of our sins and the building up of our spiritual life. I am sure that, if you first examine the accusations against Catholics, as Mrs. Watkins and her husband did, you will find as they did that they have no foundation in fact. May I ask Mrs. Jones, in all fairness, whether she can cite any instance

where Catholics have given blind unreasonablle obedience to the pope, except, of course, in matters of faith and morals?"

Margaret sat down, and there was a brief silence, the President and the other women looking at Mrs. Jones expectantly.

"Well, Mrs. President," said Mrs. Jones at length rising, "I guess I'll have to admit, that I really cannot give any instances of such blind obedience. Maybe, after all, the bad things we've learned about Catholics ought to be examined before we act on them. What about taking some of them for study in our club?"

"Mrs. President," said Mrs. Wiltse, rising, "I want to second Mrs. Jones' suggestion. I myself have heard many unkind things about Catholics; but when I try to find proof for them, there doesn't seem to be any. So I am heartily for club study of them."

Mrs. Barlow put the motion which was unanimously approved. That settled the religious question for the present, and the women separated with much greater show of cordiality towards the Burts than at the last meeting. However, owing to other unfavorable circumstances the school question was temporarily postponed.

(To be continued)

CHILDREN'S CORNER

By Joachim V. Benson, M. S., SS. T.

GRANDEUR IN A CAVE

It was on Saturday afternoon that I strolled the crowded aisles which boast on either side of five and ten cent things. Each department seemed to vie with the other displaying the ornamental. All was a riot of color. A buoyant crowd shoved and pushed and flanked themselves around smiling salesgirls. The ring of a ten cent sale, and the statical rap-tap-tap of a coin too large to be divided in a Woolworth register harmonized with the terrible screech of a Cameo record at the far end of the store. Yet no one seemed to bother, as no one ever does, in a 'five and ten' during holiday time.

Outside the streets were thronged with shoppers. A veritable parade of Santa Clauses passed through the crowds smiling, chiding and advertising toy lands innumerable. I overheard one fond mother bravely attempt an explanaton on 'why' these bewhiskered charity bureaus tramped the streets instead of being in Eskimo land attending to their business of creating thingumajigs to dance and sing until the spring breaks.

'But' he was pleading, 'these are all Santa's cousins and uncles and wives (I'm sure the latter must have slipped)—they are here to help him distribute liberty and justice to all'. The inquisitive son shrugged his shoulders and smiled wisely as if it were a huge joke to think of 'such' family affection between 'uncles and cousins' and other relatives. How-

ever, with a characteristic whistle which seemed to say, 'Now I'll tell one,' he accepted his mother's fable; but like a doubting Thomas he went on a piece, the better to inspect one of Santa's family and discover his connection with the bounteous tribe of St. Nicholas.

Shop windows were filled with gifts. People were laden with gifts. Busses were packed with gifts. Gifts everywhere; gifts and more gifts to make someone happy at Christmas.

Christmas! How joyfully the heart responds to this charming word of childhood days! A magic current fills the air during this holy season, as if some fairy hand had touched the very fibres of the human frame. An indefinable something permeates the atmosphere: invisible, yet discovered in the desire to bring gladness into a dreary heart; vague, yet clarified in the impulse to extend a helping hand to the less fortunate; elusive, yet grasped in the urge to participate in the festival, it comes to us each year as surely as the Christmas season returns. While we change as time rolls on we never grow insensible to the thrill of Christmas. It may not move us exactly in the same way each year, but cold is he who does not feel a bit of that in his consciousness akin to the simplicity of a young child. How sad would be the final days of each year if this season of Christmas had never been.

Remembered always will be the Santa Claus period of our existence. We can never obliterate our first peek at the stockings hung by the fire place. We can never duplicate the supreme delight that came when we found our presents there. For youth it is a period of unbounded festivity. For those a little further up the ladder of life it is a time of genuine bliss in remembering youth, and forgetting the struggle for existence. Those who are afflicted, who are the victims of misfortune, who suffer the effects of life's reverses are ever encouraged at this time. Joy and gladness ring forth in sweet music bells, in the melody of carols and harmony of hymns, proclaiming to all the message of sacred utterance, 'Peace on earth, to men of good will.'

Christmas! Who can write about it? Is not the delicious gladness and encouragement that thrills with every mention of the feast beyond the power of words?

In every home the spirit of expectation, and preparation for the Saviour's Birthday! But, in none so beautifully and silently and reverently as in the Home of God. From its humble hiding place a smiling, waxen-faced Babe comes forth to rest awhile on new-gathered straw. Mary and Joseph follow to take positions in the tableau. Dusky, dusty wise men resume the adoration of yesteryear The donkey, 'Christopher', and the ox, the sheep and the shepherds awake from a year of slumber. A portable stable covers the scene—and there before us is Bethlehem as we love to picture it when Christ was

born. Even if the Saviour had not been scourged—and crowned with thorns—and nailed to a cross—and crucified, still for ever and ever and ever we should be grateful to Him for His magnificent goodness in becoming the Boy Jesus and permitting you and me to celebrate His birthday.

One short meditation on the inexpressible happiness of that wintry night in Bethlehem, when a beautiful Jewish Maiden, named Mary, became the Mother of God, will make clear why God Himself is willing that at Christmas, 'We should play and make cheer.' He knew all the ways and means we would use to make ourselves happy. He knew we'd deck a Christmas tree, and hang our stockings up, and eat ourselves sick on ribbon candy. He knew we'd believe in Santa Claus, at least until we arrive at twenty-one. He knew the ten cent store and the five cent store and the grocery store would display the best—and trim the whole with holly, mistletoe and poinsettias. But He knew, too, that we would rebuild His Birthday Home to recall the real cause of our happiness.

And even though we are feeling the effects of these trying times, still we must remember that none of us are as poor as the Holy Family. No mother is forced to cradle her babe in a manger and wrap him in swaddling clothes. Be glad because Christ is born. Go over to Bethlehem and let a Baby's smile chase away your sorrows. Go over to Bethlehem and hear the sweetest lullaby a Mother ever sang. Go over to Bethlehem and a just man will usher you into the presence of your Creator.

Go over to Bethlehem and greet Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. And there in the squalor of a cave you will find the majesty of love, and the grandeur of simple family life.

WHEN FATHER TAKES ME FOR A WALK

When Father takes me for a walk
It makes me glad all day;
He puts his hand in mine and says,
"Now, Captain, lead the way."

I take him to the chipmunk's hole,
To ponds where fish are thick;
And where the big boys dig for bait,
He whittles me a stick.

And makes a willow whistle, too,
That we take turns to blow.
We scatter petals in the brook
And wonder where they go.

Then, when we're tired, we start for home
And talk of lots of things—
Why Mother has such cuddly ways,
Why birds and bees have wings.

And Father talks of business, too,
And asks me my advice.
Now, wouldn't you, if you were there,
Think walks like that were nice?

Voice trainer: "You don't sing with enough fire. Let yourself go. Open your mouth and throw yourself into it."

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